



FEMA

Texas Severe Storms TX-4332-DR ***Media Analysis Report/Morning Edition*** ***September 14, 2017***

Hot Issues

- None

News Clips Analysis/Trends

- The challenges of recovery and the big question for survivors of what to do next seem to dominate print and broadcast stories. Coverage is focusing on the opening of additional Disaster Recovery Centers, the scarcity of housing, and a widely used AP story focusing on the use of floating barges to provide housing for survivors in southeast Texas.
- FEMA coverage remains steady with stories focusing on survivor registration assistance, housing problems, and questions and concerns regarding the application process.
- There has been great concern over contaminated floodwaters after Harvey with print articles dominating coverage. A New York Times piece revealed dangerous levels of toxins in Houston floodwaters.
- Wide coverage continues to focus on volunteerism, donations and charities with celebrity-laden telethons raising millions of dollars for flood survivors.
- Hurricane Irma continues to get most of the attention as it causes devastation to the Florida Keys and the recovery process gets underway.

Social Media Analysis

On social media today, scams, neighborhood debris issues and flood insurance continues to be on the minds of Texans. While there are some positive supportive posts about FEMA in general, the posts discussing Harvey and Texas tend towards negative sentiment.

This report compiled by Julie Foster, Julie.Foster@fema.dhs.gov

Summary of Coverage

- Disaster Recovery Center opens in Webster
- New home for Disaster Recovery Center in Houston downtown building
- FEMA helps Houston evacuees with next step
- FEMA warns hurricane survivors of false contractors
- Jefferson County left off FEMA list
- Why FEMA denied disaster housing assistance for Jefferson County
- Rockport residents still reeling from Harvey concerned as focus shifts to Irma
- Floating barges to provide housing for Harvey survivors
- Dangerous toxins found in Houston floodwaters
- Houston residents exposed to contaminated floodwater
- FCO Hannes visits responder camp at Cabaniss Field
- FEMA answers questions on Facebook Live tonight
- Texas calls in Air Force to combat mosquitoes
- What you need to know about hurricane disaster aid
- Harvey flood insurance claim questions answered
- Hurricane evacuees get physical and emotional support in San Antonio
- FEMA approves funds to help with Garland flooding
- Texas businesses being sued over price-gouging during Harvey
- Short-term food assistance available to Houston flood survivors
- Be on the look-out for water damaged vehicles in car lots
- A lot of work ahead to recover from Hurricane Irma
- Florida Governor vows to rebuild Sunshine State
- Ex FEMA chief says \$15 billion disaster fund won't last 30 days
- Nueces County begins recovery process after hurricane damage
- Despite losing money the government continues to sell flood insurance
- After devastating hurricanes Lloyd's demands U.S. reforms
- Rebuilding after major hurricanes could cause more flooding
- Some hurricane-damaged schools still closed
- There are numerous ways to donate food and supplies for hurricane survivors in Central Texas
- Volunteers set to clean up storm-ravaged beaches on Texas coast
- Hand-in-hand Telethon raises \$33 million for hurricane relief in Texas and Florida
- Texas Strong concert for Harvey relief to be held in Austin
- Social Media

Notable Quotes

"I hope people don't forget about Rockport. We need the help." – Ruben Sazon, Rockport resident

"It's very devastating to be in a shelter. It's kind of hard, but we are getting everything we need. We are treated well. The Red Cross is amazing, and [the San Antonio Police Department] has been excellent and a great informational source for help around San Antonio." – Alex Spero, Houston resident

“We provide help and support for clients and staff in the shelter. [Our] role is to offer support, advocate for staff and clients, [and] when people ask us questions we help them find the right resource.” – Lynn Hottle, Red Cross volunteer from Maryland

“We got lucky when Hurricane Harvey avoided Austin, but though it missed us, it hit our neighbors hard. Every time I’ve asked you to help our neighbors you’ve risen to the challenge.”- Steve Adler. Austin Mayor

Headlines

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[After The Hurricanes, Watch Out For The Flood Of Damaged Cars](#)
[Fla. Gov. Rick Scott: ‘Work To Do’ For State To Recover After Irma](#)
[Florida Governor Vows To Rebuild Sunshine State](#)
[Hurricane Irma And Harvey \\$15B Disaster Fund Won’t Last 30 Days, Says Ex-FEMA Chief](#)
[Social Media](#)

Recovery

[Nueces County recovery includes mosquito spraying, debris pickup and FEMA assistance](#)

NFIP and Flood Mapping

[Why The Government Sells Flood Insurance Despite Losing Money : NPR](#)
[Lloyd's Demands US Reforms After Devastating Hurricanes](#)
[Will Rebuilding After Hurricanes Harvey And Irma Make More Flooding Inevitable?](#)

Schools

[**HURRICANE HARVEY: Some damaged Texas schools still closed**](#)

Volunteers/Donations/Charities

[**How to donate food, supplies to Hurricane Harvey victims in Central Texas**](#)

[**Volunteers needed for beach cleanups**](#)

[**Luke Bryan Invites Hurricane Harvey First Responders to Houston Show**](#)

[**Willie Nelson, Paul Simon join Texas Strong concert for Harvey relief**](#)

Stories

[**Additional FEMA Disaster Recovery Center Opens In Harris County**](#)

[Houston Public Media](#)

September 14, 2017

A State of Texas/FEMA Disaster Recovery Center will open Thursday, September 14, in Harris County in the city of Webster.

Disaster recovery centers offer in-person support to individuals and businesses in 39 counties, included in the Texas federal disaster declaration for Hurricane Harvey.

Recovery specialists from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), the State and other agencies will be at the center to talk about assistance and to help anyone who needs guidance in filing an application. The new center is at the following location:

Webster Civic Center
311 Pennsylvania Avenue
Webster TX 77598
Hours: Daily, from 7 a.m.-7 p.m.

The U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) disaster assistance employees are committed to helping businesses and residents rebuild as quickly as possible. SBA representatives are available to answer questions about SBA's disaster loan program and help business owners and residents apply to SBA.

If possible, homeowners, renters and businesses should register with FEMA before visiting a recovery center. Eligible residents may register for assistance the following ways:

Online at DisasterAssistance.gov.

Phone 800-621-3362 (voice, 711/VRS-Video Relay Service) (TTY: 800-462-7585). Multilingual operators are available (press 2 for Spanish).

Via the FEMA app, available for Apple and Android mobile devices. To download visit: fema.gov/mobile-app.

The following information is helpful when registering:

- Address of the location where the damage occurred (pre-disaster address).
- Current mailing address.
- Current telephone number.
- Insurance information.
- Total household annual income.
- Routing and account number for checking or savings account (this allows FEMA to directly transfer disaster assistance funds into a bank account).
- A description of disaster-caused damage and losses.

Disaster survivors can visit any of the centers for assistance. Locations of other recovery centers are online at www.fema.gov/DRC.

Homeowners, renters and businesses in Aransas, Austin, Bastrop, Bee, Brazoria, Calhoun, Chambers, Colorado, Dewitt, Fayette, Fort Bend, Galveston, Goliad, Gonzalez, Hardin, Harris, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Karnes, Kleberg, Lavaca, Lee, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Newton, Nueces, Orange, Polk, Sabine, San Jacinto, Refugio, San Patricio, Tyler, Victoria, Waller, Walker and Wharton counties may be eligible for help.

[Disaster Recovery Center to move to new downtown building](#)

[Houston Chronicle](#)

By Brooke A. Lewis

September 13, 2017

The State of Texas/FEMA Disaster Recovery Center will move to a new downtown building starting Thursday, according to a news release from the agency.

The center currently located in the George R. Brown Convention Center is going to move to the Netrality Building at 1301 Fannin Street.

It will open Thursday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., and then begin normal daily hours from 7 a.m to 7 p.m following its grand opening.

Disaster recovery centers assist victims and other businesses, who are included in the Texas federal disaster declaration for Hurricane Harvey. There are 39 counties included in the declaration.

Recovery specialists from FEMA and the U.S. Small Business Administration are available to talk with storm victims and also assist them in filling out applications.

The U.S. Small Business Administration also can help those interested in applying for their disaster loan program.

Homeowners, renters and businesses should register with FEMA before visiting a recovery center.

Harvey Evacuees In N. Texas Shelters, Hotels Prepare For Next Step

KTVT-TV, Dallas, TX

By Jack Fink

September 13, 2017

DALLAS (CBS11) – Derrick Hayes of Houston left the Dallas mega-shelter on Tuesday after escaping Hurricane Harvey's floodwaters late last month.

While FEMA put him and his family up in a downtown hotel for 30 days, he said he attended a housing fair for evacuees Wednesday to find a more permanent place to live.

"I'm searching around for me and my family, trying to see what's better for me and my family, trying to see what's best," said Hayes.

FEMA spokeswoman Rita Egan said a number of agencies are helping evacuees with their next step.

"FEMA, the state of Texas, and Housing and Urban and Development, other federal agencies and state agencies are working diligently to come up with a long-term program for housing," said Egan.

Egan said the Hayes family may be eligible to have their hotel stay extended before they have to move out. She recommends evacuees remain in contact with FEMA, especially if their situation changes.

The Red Cross says more than 2,000 evacuees remain registered to the three shelters in North Texas. No word when the facilities will close.

As for Derrick Hayes and his family, they're trying to figure out if they should start over in Dallas or try to return home to their apartment complex. "It's kind of unknown right now because it was under-water."

For now, he's making the best of it, as he makes his third or fourth trip between his hotel and shelter to pick up supplies for his family. "Someone has to do it. It's a good work-out. I haven't rode a bike since I was younger. So it's about time I get back to it."

FEMA Warns Hurricane Victims on False Contractors

KRGV-TV, Rio Grande Valley, TX

By Ana Anquiano

September 13, 2017

WESLACO – Millions of people are impacted from not only Hurricane Harvey, but from Hurricane Irma as well.

Relief organizations including the federal emergency management agency are all tasked now with not only the cleanup, but also with rebuilding efforts.

CHANNEL 5 NEWS spoke to FEMA about the work they're doing to help people in hurricane ravaged areas to recover.

FEMA representatives said they too are swamped with the work.

Deanna Frazier, FEMA media relations manager, said the agency is now working with outside agencies to help get the job done.

There is a broad range of positions available from customer to logistics to mechanical engineer. The work would only be temporary, but it will be full time.

"FEMA cannot do it all. And so that is the bottom line. So we need to contract with outside agencies and outside individuals to help us get our job done," stated Frazier.

The public should beware of people or companies who say they are doing contract work with the government. Those phony job ads can often be found on Facebook.

CHANNEL 5 NEWS reported on one last week. The post said FEMA was hiring a thousand people and offering \$2,000 a week. That post turned out to be illegitimate.

If anyone is interested in applying for an official FEMA position, they can find a list of jobs on the FEMA website. They may also search for legitimate positions on the Texas Workforce Commission website, just type "FEMA" in the search engine to see job listings.

FEMA left Jefferson County off its list

[Beaumont Enterprise](#)

By Dan Wallach Published

September 13, 2017

Precious Armstrong and her family lived in the Tram Road area until Harvey allowed the uninvited Pine Island Bayou to move in.

The storm sent Armstrong, her husband, William, and their two little girls to hard-hit Houston, of all places to seek shelter.

Since Armstrong couldn't commute to her job in Beaumont with National Oil Well, the family has moved in with her mother locally until a better situation can be worked out.

That might be tough because FEMA originally left.

Jefferson County off its emergency housing list. County Judge Jeff Branick spent Monday on the phone with state and federal officials to get the county listed.

Branick said he got a text at 5:44 a.m. Tuesday informing him that FEMA now recognized the county's critical housing shortage.

"They thought we had plenty of hotels and apartments," said Branick with just a bit of frustration.

"We did three weeks ago, but we don't now," he said.

Armstrong's home is covered by flood insurance - "Thank God," she said - but that's a longer-term fix. Right now, along with thousands of others with flood-damaged homes, she needs temporary housing. "I hope it'll be a place to stay, like a travel trailer on my property or an apartment, though they might be tough to come by," she said.

On Tuesday, Armstrong was out shopping for her 6-year-old daughter London's school supplies, which were lost in the flood. London starts school today at Legacy Christian Academy.

Also starting today at 7 a.m. is the FEMA disaster assistance center in the old Goodwill store space at Gateway Shopping Center, 3871 Stagg Drive.

The center will have staff there to help people register for disaster assistance or to check on their status if they already have registered at www.disasterassistance.gov.

Armstrong said she tried to apply online, but the website is overloaded and she can't get on yet. FEMA figures show that 221,000 people from Texas have had requests for registration approved so far out of 708,000 requests, a figure expected to spike sharply upward in the coming days.

So far in Jefferson County, almost 59,000 people registered, with approvals of \$12 million in assistance. The figures from around the region show that urban areas were hit harder than rural counties, but figures from across the region are expected to climb once people are able to get back to their homes to assess damage.

"The disaster is still unfolding," said Deanna Frazier, spokeswoman for FEMA in Texas. Generally, in disasters, FEMA opens registration for assistance for 60 days, but Texas doesn't even have a start date because people are still displaced, she said.

That means no cutoff date has been determined.

"We're looking at ways to provide long-term housing," she said.

Frazier said a decision on what to provide should be reached by the end of the week. That could be manufactured houses, travel trailers or rentals, if any apartments or undamaged homes can be found.

The main FEMA assistance program is the Individuals and Household assistance program. It offers repair assistance or addresses other critical needs displaced people might have.

In Jefferson County, which has about 81,000 single-family homes, an estimated 14,000 to 16,000 are flood-damaged, including 3,000 in unincorporated areas like Bevil Oaks, Northwest Forest, the China-Nome area, and Hamshire, Branick said.

Port Arthur is particularly hard-hit with about 7,000 homes flooded; Groves, 2,700; Port Neches, 572; Beaumont, 2,000.

Greg Fountain, the county emergency management coordinator, said less than one-fourth of single-family homeowners carried flood insurance.

Branick said one of the earliest efforts people will see is the STEP program, or Sheltered Temporary Electric Power.

That means contractors can get into homes and tear out flood damage and help make the places livable in the short term. That could take between one and two weeks to start up.

"It'll help make the house safe and healthy so people can shelter in place," he said.

Dan Wallach is a freelance writer.

Here's why FEMA left Jefferson Co. off flooded housing list

Beaumont Enterprise

By Dan Wallach

September 12, 2017

A FEMA bureaucrat in Washington, D.C., chose to leave Jefferson County off a list of Texas counties struck by Harvey because there were ample hotel rooms and rental housing available, said County Judge Jeff Branick.

"There were three weeks ago," said Branick, who worked the phone almost all of Sunday to straighten out the housing mess.

"As of 5:44 a.m. (today) we were approved for direct housing assistance," Branick said. That means the residents of an estimated 15,000 homes in Jefferson County will be eligible for various levels of recovery through FEMA, Branick said.

"We had 4,000 evacuate through the (Jack Brooks Regional) airport, thousands more by bus and we can't repatriate them," he said.

One of the most immediate avenues of assistance will be what's called the STEP program, or Sheltered Temporary Electric Power.

That will provide the ability for contractors to come into a flooded home, rip out sheet rock and flooring and help make the home habitable so people can shelter in place.

"It won't be aesthetically nice, but it will be safe," Branick said.

That help might be available in one to two weeks, he said.

Branick said he has seen entire neighborhoods in south county cities with debris piled up. However, in some Port Arthur neighborhoods, many lack the ability to tear out flood damage or the resources to hire contractors and the FEMA program should help.

The same applies in the county's northwest, like the Bevil Oaks area and Pinewood and Northwest Forest where residents have not been able to get back in.

In Port Arthur, about 7,000 homes were flood damaged. In Beaumont, about 2,000 were damaged. Thousands of rental units for low-to-moderate income were inundated, Branick said.

Community block grant money flowing from the federal to state government could take a couple of months, but should flow much more quickly than it did after Hurricane Ike in 2008, Branick said.

A FEMA disaster assistance center will open near Christus St. Mary in Port Arthur on Wednesday and the Beaumont assistance center at the old Goodwill office at Gateway Shopping Center, Mobile offices should be available soon in the northwest areas of the county, Branick said. People who suffered damage in the flooding should register with FEMA at disasterassistance.gov

Harvey Victims In Texas Still Recovering As Focus Shifts To Irma And Florida

USA Today

By Rick Jervis

September 13, 2017

After Hurricane Harvey battered his apartment and flattened his art studio in Rockport, Texas, Ruben Sazon worried that Houston's dramatic floods would overshadow his coastal city's devastation.

Now, there's a new disaster drawing attention away from Texas altogether: Hurricane Irma rumbled over most of Florida over the weekend, extending damaging winds and pounding rains into Georgia and Alabama and leaving a trail of destruction.

"I hope people don't forget about Rockport," said Sazon, as he drove around Corpus Christi recently looking for a new apartment. "We need the help."

Residents and leaders across Houston and Southeast Texas are in the midst of a mud-caked recovery from Hurricane Harvey after unprecedented floods and winds – from Katy to Orange to Rockport – ravaged the area.

Harvey is estimated to have caused up to \$160 billion in damages, impacting more than 100,000 homes and making it one of the costliest natural disasters in U.S. history. President Trump last week approved \$15 billion in disaster aid for Harvey victims.

Irma drew a lot of national media attention away from Texas, as it churned over Caribbean islands, sideswiped Cuba and rumbled into Florida. But the federal, state and local response to Harvey has gathered good momentum and won't be slowed due to Irma, said Nueces County Judge Loyd Neal, whose area includes Port Aransas, a beach town that was one of the hardest hit by Harvey.

Trump and Vice President Pence visited the battered Texas Coast late last month and met with Neal and other local leaders. Also, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott last week appointed Texas A&M University System Chancellor John Sharp to lead a disaster task force that will oversee recovery efforts.

Port Aransas's immediate need is to find a way to haul away the quickly-mounting mounds of debris pulled from storm-damaged homes, condos and businesses, Neal said. About two-thirds of the city's 2,700 condo units were destroyed in the storm.

But power, sewer and water were recently restored to the barrier island and recovery has been steady, he said. "[Abbott] is not going to let us be forgotten," Neal said. "Neither are his staff and people."

The close timing of the disasters that hit Texas and Florida created a kinship between first responders in the two states. In one of several such instances, Florida dispatched 100 game wardens to Texas as the floodwaters rose, and Texas responded recently with 100 of their own game wardens as Irma approached, said state Rep. Dade Phelan, whose district covers Orange, Port Arthur and other areas impacted by Harvey.

"Having just gone through one of the most expensive and catastrophic storms that's ever hit the U.S., we're certainly sympathetic" to Florida, he said.

Phelan said he is less concerned about politics interfering in the distribution of federal aid to Texas and Florida – Florida, after all, is an important swing state in presidential elections, while Texas is reliably Republican – and more worried about the back-to-back disasters making rebuilding supplies scarcer in the region.

Already area stores have been reporting shortages of carpets, tiles, cabinets, plywood and other materials needed to rebuild homes, he said.

“Irma’s going to tax that,” Phelan said. “There is going to be a shortage of supplies out there and a whole lot of demand.”

In Houston, recovery has been a patchwork, with some residents back at home and returning to work, while others just returning to flood-ruined homes or still in shelters, said Zakary Rodriguez, a Houston high school teacher and community activist.

The attention shift from Texas to Florida will mostly affect those still struggling with recovery, including undocumented immigrants and families in shelters, he said. Zachary volunteers at the shelter at the NRG Center in Houston, which, as of Saturday, still housed several thousand evacuees.

“At this point, if they’re not back in their home, they have no home to go to. They’re homeless. They’ve lost everything,” he said. “Those are the ones feeling most abandoned.”

Barges to provide housing for some Harvey-displaced Texans

KXAN-TV, Austin, TX

September 13, 2017

PORT ARTHUR, Texas (AP) — Government officials say floating barges outfitted with living quarters will provide temporary homes for hundreds of Southeast Texas residents displaced by Hurricane Harvey.

Port Arthur Mayor Derrick Freeman on Tuesday announced the housing plan for as many as 600 people left homeless after Harvey. Freeman says two floating barges will provide living space and three meals a day, plus laundry facilities.

Rockport family renovating home before Harvey hit face enormous costs

Jefferson County Judge Jeff Branick says the two berthing barges are especially meant to help families.

The Navy has used berthing barges to house military personnel at times when ships were undergoing repairs.

Port Arthur is 80 miles east of Houston.

Looking for Answers, Times Reporters Tested the Water in Houston

New York Times

By Sheila Kaplan

September 13, 2017

For survivors of a disaster like Hurricane Harvey, the danger isn’t over when the waters recede. In most floods, especially those in a highly industrial — and polluted — area like Houston, the water can carry and

then deposit other threats: dangerous bacteria, toxic chemicals from factories and waste sites, plus alligators and snakes.

Times reporters couldn't do anything about the reptiles, but we wanted to warn people about the possibility of getting sick from nasty bacteria and hazardous pollutants. So shortly after the hurricane ended, we embarked on our own scientific analysis of the water in various Houston neighborhoods — the results of which led to an article that we published earlier this week. Our findings were worrisome.

The New York Times took this initiative due to a lack of available data. Neither the Environmental Protection Agency nor the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality would give us any information on what they were testing and what they had found. And while the Houston Health Department was doing some sampling of the floodwaters, it did not have any results to share yet.

Times Insider delivers behind-the-scenes insights from The New York Times. Visit us at Times Insider and follow us on Twitter. Questions or feedback? Email us.

Tara Parker-Pope, the editor of The Times's Well column, suggested we organize our own tests. At first, we considered buying containers and filling them with water and sediment samples ourselves. But reporters are not scientists, and we wanted to make sure our data was accurate — and obtained in accordance with the best scientific practices.

We reached out to Winifred Hamilton, director of the Environmental Health Service at the Baylor College of Medicine, who put together a team that included Lauren Stadler and Qilin Li, researchers from Rice University; herself and Jesse Crain III from Baylor; and Loren Raun and Lisa Montemayor from the City of Houston.

Our agreement was that all information we gathered would become public.

We still needed someone to run the analysis. We called around to various labs and decided on A & B Labs, with an impeccable record and a willingness to analyze the samples quickly.

I won't tell you how much it cost, in case our executive editor is reading this. Celia Dugger, The Times's health and science editor, gave us a sizable budget. She was concerned that nobody yet knew what was in the water, and residents were already returning home in some neighborhoods to start cleaning up.

On Monday, Sept. 4, I flew to Houston, where I met my colleague Jack Healy, The Times's Rocky Mountain correspondent, who had been covering the hurricane virtually since it started.

Tuesday morning, we picked up the sterile containers from the lab and put on our waders, goggles, masks and gloves. Jack and his team headed east to the Channelview neighborhood, along the San Jacinto River. We wanted to test there because it was downstream from several Superfund sites, and residents had reported some leaks.

I went west, to the Clayton Homes public housing complex, in downtown Houston, and then to a suburban area around the Houston Energy Corridor. Ms. Montemayor kindly lent us a boat, and the researchers sailed down along Briarhills Parkway.

What we didn't know then, because it wasn't announced by the Fire Department until Saturday, was that a few wastewater treatment plants had been flooded and had released raw sewage that was carried down the Buffalo Bayou. Our tests also showed that, along the way, the sewage picked up lead, arsenic, chromium and other stuff you don't want your kids to play in.

Outside a house at the Clayton Homes complex, there were piles of debris — mattresses, rugs, stuffed animals, algebra books and family photos — atop an upside-down refrigerator.

Inside, there was an unbelievable stench. I took one step and turned around. (Even with a mask, breathing made my throat burn.) But the researchers were stoic and spent an hour taking samples, providing us with the first measure of toxicity inside a flooded house.

The results were terrible: The level of E. coli (an indication of fecal contamination from the sewage) was 135 times what is generally considered safe, and there were raised levels of lead and other hazardous metals. Meanwhile, Jack and his team found a truly dangerous threat: liquid mercury beads, spread out over the sand.

The next day, we went out with a team from Texas A & M, which sampled around Superfund sites, but we are still waiting for those results. Stay tuned for another article when we receive them.

We relied on one crucial person to double-check the data: Charlotte Smith, a microbiologist and water specialist at the University of California, Berkeley, School of Public Health. Ms. Smith generously spent much of her weekend reading hundreds of pages of test data, from our quality control documents to the test results.

We would like readers to know how grateful we are to Ms. Smith, and to other scientists who help make our work possible.

After Hurricane Harvey, Some Texans Are Walking in Streets Contaminated With Their Own Poop

[Newsweek](#)

By Dana Dovey

September 13, 2017

Just when you thought the worst was over for Houston, new reports suggest that some neighborhoods are being exposed to floodwaters contaminated with bacteria such as E.coli due to wastewater overflow. Although the drinking water system remains intact, there may be repercussions from external exposure to these dirty floodwaters.

Following the extreme flooding from Hurricane Harvey, sewage and wastewater treatment systems have overflowed in some Houston areas, causing floodwaters to become contaminated with dangerous bacteria, tests organized by The New York Times have confirmed. It's not clear how far the contaminated water has spread, but residents should still treat all floodwater as though it could be toxic and act accordingly.

"I can tell you that as of today, we have 39 wastewater treatment facilities; all 39 are accessible and operational," Yvonne Forrest, deputy director of Houston Water, told Newsweek. "Thirty seven of my 39 plants are meeting the cleanliness requirements."

Two plants west of Houston were completely inundated by floodwaters; at one point they were covered with as much as 10 feet of water. They are still operating, but at low capacity.

Unfortunately, sewage contamination following a natural disaster is nothing new. According to Dr. Michelle Fanucchi, associate professor in Environmental Health Services at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, it's to be expected in any hurricane or case of major flooding.

“Anytime you have a flood event, there is a chance that the flood waters are going to have raw sewage in them,” Fanucchi told Newsweek. “This is not a rare occurrence, and this is not unique to Harvey. When you have a heavy rain even, it can overwhelm the treatment centers and cause raw sewage to leak into the waterways.”

The wastewater overflow has not affected the area’s drinking water, with daily tests confirming that drinking water is still safe. However, the contaminated floodwater has likely come in contact with residents’ homes and belongings.

“Just because of the magnitude of the flooding, if there was an overflowing manhole than yes, untreated wastewater would be released into the environment,” says Latrice Babin, deputy director of Harris County Pollution Control Services Department. “People need to understand they need to be careful. There are chemical things in the water that we are not sure of.”

Possible contaminants in the flood water include anything that you might find in a sewage system. Fanucchi cited E.coli and hepatitis as more prominent bugs, but other pathogens, such as cholera and typhoid, could also thrive in these waters. The New York Times reported that Houston Hospitals are also seeing more cases of cellulitis, a reddened skin infection that may have resulted from prolonged exposure to contaminated waters.

Upon returning home, residents are urged to get rid of any standing water and use rubber gloves, boots and goggles when cleaning. Safety is the biggest concern; Fanucchi emphasizes that “when in doubt of whether or not you can clean something, throw it out.”

It will likely be at least two weeks until the wastewater treatment facilities are fully repaired. However, Babin says it's possible that some of these contaminated waters could clear away on their own.

“I just came back from being in the field today and I didn't really see any of the black and brown waters that had been reported,” Babin said. “It could be in the receding of the water that these [contaminants] are moving on.”

Head of FEMA operations in Texas visits first responder camp at Cabaniss Field

[KZTV-TV, Corpus Christi, TX](#)

September 13, 2017

CORPUS CHRISTI - The man in charge of FEMA's operations in Texas is here in the Coastal Bend getting a first hand look at his agency's response to Hurricane Harvey.

Kevin Hannes, Federal Coordinating Officer for State Recovery, made one of his first stops at Cabaniss Field where a camp is set up for state and federal first responders.

Hannes tells Action 10 News that FEMA's biggest concern right now is to find homes for Coastal Bend residents displaced by Harvey.

One of his other top priorities is to reassure storm victims in the Coastal Bend that FEMA resources that are already here will NOT be diverted to assist the victims of Hurricane Irma.

"We're here, we're not going anywhere, and along with the state of Texas, we're here to support this recovery as long as it takes," said Hannes.

The tent city currently housing first responders can house up to one thousand people.

Currently, there are about 700 first responders at the camp, which was set up to keep hotel space open for displaced storm victims.

KZTV hosting Facebook Live with Andy Liscano, FEMA spokesperson

KZTV-TV, Corpus Christi, TX

September 13, 2017

CORPUS CHRISTI - Action 10 News will be hosting a Facebook live with Andy Liscano and a FEMA spokesperson this evening.

Tune into the KZTV Action 10 News Facebook page at 7 p.m. to watch the Facebook live and ask any questions you may have regarding FEMA.

On a related note, if you would like to help donate to KZTV's Harvey relief fund, "Giving to the Gulf" visit: kztv10.com/strong.

All funds raised will stay right here in the Coastal Bend and go towards the efforts to rebuilding areas in the Coastal Bend that were severely impacted by Hurricane Harvey.

Swarmed With Mosquitoes After Harvey, Texas Calls In The Air Force

Government Executive

By Zoë Schlanger

September 13, 2017

In an effort to combat the swarms of mosquitoes apparently making mating grounds out of the standing water left behind from Hurricane Harvey, Texas has called in the big planes. The state asked the US Air Force to spray 6 million acres in the state with insecticide from its low-flying C-130 cargo planes. The Air Force has long used its planes in mosquito-control missions.

The work began this weekend, with three counties sprayed so far, according to Reuters. The hope is that the spraying will prevent mosquito-borne disease (though most mosquitoes that arrive after flooding don't carry disease, according to a Texas health official), and prevent emergency response slowdowns by workers inundated by biting insects.

The Air Force is using naled, which is in the organophosphate category of insecticides, and though widely used in the US, is banned in the EU. The EU decided to ban naled in 2012 out of concern for human health.

“The scenarios evaluated in the human health risk assessment as well as in the environmental risk assessment showed a potential and unacceptable risk,” the European Commission wrote in its decision.

American health officials disagree. Both the Centers for Disease Control and the US Environmental Protection Agency stand behind naled, saying the small amount of the insecticide sprayed from planes doesn’t expose people enough to pose a health concern.

An Air Force spokesperson reiterated that position in a news release, saying the insecticide will be used in volumes the EPA considers safe. “The system disperses droplets small enough to land on a mosquito’s wing, using less than one ounce of naled per acre. That’s less than one shot glass for an area the size of a football field,” the spokesperson said.

Naled is already everywhere in the US—health departments spray roughly 16 million acres in the country with the insecticide each year. It’s also often used after disasters like hurricanes and flooding to curb mosquitoes.

The chemical has caused controversy in recent years. In 2016, naled spraying inadvertently caused millions of honeybee deaths in South Carolina, and Florida health officials’ decision to spray naled in Miami Beach caused protest among residents. (Spraying there has continued.) When the CDC sent a shipment of naled to Puerto Rico to combat Zika, Puerto Rican governor Alejandro García Padilla sent it back, according to the Guardian.

Naled works as a neurotoxin, killing mosquitoes by interfering with an enzyme essential to the nervous systems of both insects and humans. Research on whether it poses a threat to human nervous systems at the levels used to kill mosquitoes is limited. A 2016 study from the University of Michigan looked at babies living in China; they found that the babies most exposed to naled while in the womb scored 3% to 4% lower on fine motor skill tests than their less-exposed peers by the time they were nine months old.

Another study looked at Mexican-American children living in agricultural regions in California, where organophosphates like naled are used regularly—children there had higher rates of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder.

But when Mother Jones spoke to Dana Barr, one of the authors of the study on Mexican-American children, she mostly agreed that aerial spraying doesn’t pose as significant a threat. “Likely the small amount sprayed won’t pose significant risk,” she told the magazine, but said people who live in sprayed areas should “consider their exposures from other sources as well,” like from non-organic food and gardening insecticide. She also said women who are pregnant and infants should “take precautions to stay inside during spraying,” since they’d be most sensitive to any negative affects.

Hurricane Disaster Aid: What You Need To Know

[CBS News](#)

By Kathy Kristof

September 13, 2017

This relief can include money to rent a hotel room or apartment, and for food and medical care. To apply, go to [DisasterAssistance.gov](#) within 60 days of the date of disaster declaration. You should have:

Disaster declarations in Texas and Florida make residents of the affected counties eligible for a wide array of federal relief programs. But just what kinds of assistance can you qualify for, and how do you get it?

Aid with temporary living expenses

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's "Individuals and Households Program" steps in to help provide temporary economic relief to families displaced in a major natural disaster when private insurance isn't available to pay the tab. To qualify, you need a way to verify your identity and that you're a U.S. citizen (or nationalized noncitizen or qualified alien) and have expenses and serious needs that are both directly caused by the disaster and not covered by insurance.

This relief can include money to rent a hotel room or apartment, and for food and medical care. To apply, go to [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://www.disasterassistance.gov) within 60 days of the date of disaster declaration. You should have:

Your Social Security number

The address where the damage occurred

A description of the damage

Your current mailing address and working phone number

Insurance information

Household income

A routing and account number for your checking or savings account. (Most relief money is paid directly to your bank account.)

Notably, if flooding damaged your home, you most likely don't have have insurance coverage for temporary living expenses. Even if you have federal flood insurance, it doesn't reimburse homeowners for the cost of being displaced. You would only potentially have this coverage if you had a supplemental flood insurance policy or if your damage was caused by wind, fire or the results of the same.

In other words, if the hurricane blew the roof off your house, causing rain to come in, you would likely be covered under the wind damage provision in a normal homeowner's policy.

Some supplemental flood insurance policies also cover temporary living costs, but that's not guaranteed. Whether you would have it will depend on your insurer and the policy you bought. If you're uncertain, contact your agent. Also, if you think you don't have coverage, you can apply for disaster aid and simply repay FEMA if do you get a subsequent insurance reimbursement.

Housing assistance

FEMA also provides economic help if you need long-term housing while your home is uninhabitable, as well as home repair and home replacement assistance. This aid doesn't pay to rebuild your home as it was. (To return your home to its pre-disaster condition, you may need to apply for a low-interest SBA loan.)

In some instances, as after Hurricane Katrina, the agency may provide this help by making temporary mobile homes available for displaced families. This option is generally used when not enough rental housing is available in the affected areas. The benefit of this so-called "direct housing assistance" is that its value isn't subject to FEMA's total assistance limit, which is \$33,000 per household.

Plus, FEMA disaster assistance payments are not taxable.

Unemployment assistance

If a disaster throws you out of work, the Disaster Unemployment Assistance program kicks in to provide weekly unemployment payments for those who don't qualify for ordinary jobless benefits.

Unemployment insurance is a federal program that's administered by the states, so there are variations in the minimum and maximum benefit amounts. Payments under FEMA program are the same as the ordinary unemployment insurance program. In Texas, the current maximum benefit amount is \$493 per week; in Florida, it's \$275 per week. Benefits are typically paid for a maximum of 26 weeks. Unemployment insurance payments generally are taxable.

Tax assistance

The IRS has extended filing deadlines for those in disaster areas, generally giving them until January of next year to file and pay tax installments. If you get a late payment notice in the meantime, you can call the number on the notice to have the penalty waived.

Taxpayers may also write off casualty losses that exceed 10 percent of their adjusted gross income. Importantly, these losses can be deducted from the return filed for the year prior to the disaster. So if you had major losses from Hurricane Harvey or Irma, you could file an amended return and get a refund of 2016 taxes paid.

For further information on claiming casualty losses, consult your tax preparer or IRS publication 4684.

Access to 401(k) savings

If you have money in a workplace retirement plan, you may be able to borrow some of that cash through a hardship loan. The IRS announced recently that it would reduce the "red tape" on corporations providing hardship loans to employees affected by the disasters.

However, if you fail to repay the loan, the withdrawn amount will be considered a "distribution" and will be subject to both income taxes and potential tax penalties.

Answering Your Insurance Claim Questions After Harvey

KPRC-TV Houston,

By Amy Davis

September 13, 2017

As flood victims get back to their homes and file claims, insurance adjusters are coming into town. Many homeowners have questions about what those adjusters are telling them.

Consumer expert Amy Davis is looking into some of the claims and answering those questions.

About 249,212 homeowners in Harris County have flood insurance through FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program. You would think those policy holders would be in the best position right now to have their losses covered.

One woman in Lakewood Forest off Highway 249 called Davis because the adjuster her insurance company sent to her home told her a few things that just didn't sound right.

Her home got about eight to 10 inches of water inside from Harvey. She has flood insurance on her personal property and the dwelling. The out of state adjuster her insurance company sent to her home told her that her appliances are not covered under flood insurance. He also said her policy won't replace her ceramic tile or other items like cookware that was covered in sewer water. A FEMA representative

and a local insurance agent told Davis these statements are not accurate. They said appliances, flooring and personal property are in fact covered by flood insurance. In general, a flood insurance policy on your dwelling covers.

- the building and its foundation
- the electrical system and plumbing
- central a/c equipment, furnaces and water heaters
- refrigerators, cooking stoves and built-in appliances
- carpeting over an unfinished floor
- wood paneling, bookcases and cabinets
- window blinds
- debris removal

Other property would be covered under her flood insurance personal property coverage.

If the adjuster tells you any of these things are not covered by flood insurance, you should get that in writing and take it back to your insurance agent to further investigate. If you are not satisfied with the answers you are getting from the adjuster or your agent, you can file an appeal with FEMA. See page 8 of the National Flood Insurance Claims Handbook

Harvey Evacuees Receive Physical, Emotional Support In San Antonio

San Antonio Rivard Report

September 13, 2017

Houston residents Alex and Alyssa Spero have been at the American Red Cross shelter at Abraham Kazen Middle School on San Antonio's Southside since they were forced to evacuate their apartment during Hurricane Harvey. Regaining their material belongings will consume months, but the process of regaining their emotional footing began at the shelter.

As the water began flooding their apartment, the Speros – along with Alyssa's brother, his wife, and their 3-month-old baby – went up to the second floor to find shelter in a vacant apartment. A family member called to let them know that the National Guard had been called to their location. The Speros were directed to stand outside and wave something in the air so that rescuers could spot them.

Alex Spero went outside and held a car seat in the air, waving it around like a flag. “They never saw us,” he said. “They left and we were not rescued.”

Spero was reminded that his neighbor had a makeshift wooden boat, and in what he called a “life-or-death decision,” he chose to swim the five blocks toward what he considered his family’s last chance to get out safely.

“I felt like I was getting bit a lot,” he said. “I saw catfish and gators, but my main priority was my family.”

Retrieving the boat, Spero got his family into the craft and began to pull them to safety with a rope attached to his waist. Then the rain started again, which scared Spero and his family the most.

“The adrenaline was pumping so fast that I shoved my emotions to the side,” he said. “I feel like I’m still fighting back all of my emotions. I’ve never been in this situation.”

After his family was safe, Spero and his brother-in-law continued to use the boat to rescue others. He remembers assisting six families “until [his] body started locking up.” At that point he decided to rest, worried that if he pushed himself too hard he would drown. Related: [San Antonio Welcomes Evacuees, Deploys Help for Harvey](#)

When the Speros arrived at the Red Cross shelter at Kazen Middle School they felt emotionally drained.

“It’s very devastating to be in a shelter,” Spero said. “It’s kind of hard, but we are getting everything we need. We are treated well. The Red Cross is amazing, and [the San Antonio Police Department] has been excellent and a great informational source for help around San Antonio.”

In their conversation with the Rivard Report, Alex Spero did most of the talking, whereas Alyssa remained quiet throughout. When asked if she wanted to share anything from her point of view, she became tearful.

“I can’t. I’ll cry,” she said as tears began streaming down her face. “This is the worst moment of my life so far.”

For many, the effects of Hurricane Harvey were traumatic. Whether they swam out of the flood waters to safety or evacuated only to return to a home that had been decimated, the toll that these experiences take on a person’s mental health can be tremendous.

Lynn Hottle is a licensed clinical social worker and American Red Cross volunteer from Maryland who was stationed at the Kazen shelter. Hottle said that the emotions displayed by the shelter’s temporary residents range from extreme hopefulness to anger. People are worried about how they will receive their Social Security benefits now that their bank or home has been flooded. Many have been displaced, and some don’t know the condition of their home or if they even have a home to return to. Most struggle with all of the unknowns.

“We provide help and support for clients and staff in the shelter,” Hottle said. “[Our] role is to offer support, advocate for staff and clients, [and] when people ask us questions we help them find the right resource.”

With hundreds of people packed into shelters following a stressful and traumatic situation, tension may rise quickly.

Cots for evacuees line the gymnasium floor at Kazen Middle School in San Antonio on Aug. 27, 2017.

“[People experience] the entire range of emotions. [We do] a lot of work with grief and loss – this is a loss,” Hottle said. “People could be grieving the loss of their livelihood. They have been separated from their families. It’s confusing, it’s frightening for people, and it’s frustrating.”

While Hottle and other disaster mental health employees are licensed to provide mental health services in their home state, state-by-state license restrictions do not allow them to provide direct therapy to those staying in Red Cross shelters, she said.

The Red Cross mental health workers are trained to defuse heightened emotions. For those in need of specialized or ongoing therapeutic services, they turn to local organizations.

Hottle, who has deployed as a Red Cross volunteer a number of times, told the Rivard Report that the mental health of those in a helping position during a crisis is of equal importance to that of those who were directly affected by the event.

Red Cross mental health workers also provide supportive services to fellow volunteers. Hottle recalled a time during a volunteer deployment where a staff member had to be sent back home because “they [were not] able to emotionally deal with it.”

“It’s a roller coaster when I listen to the stories,” Hottle said. “I’m a human being. I feel sad.” Related: [Starting the Long Road to Recovery in Port Aransas](#)

The Center for Healthcare Services (CHCS), San Antonio’s local mental health authority, has ensured that licensed mental health workers were stationed at shelters 24/7 to provide any needed therapeutic services to evacuees.

David Pan, director of acute care services at CHCS, told the Rivard Report that the center is prepared to take on the mental health services for those who enter Bexar County at any given moment. He said that the center has been around since 1965, and its employees are well-versed in disaster preparedness and response.

“Any time there is a natural disaster, we provide ongoing [mental health] services to those who need it,” Pan said.

In addition to the stress and trauma victims experienced, Hurricane Harvey’s aftermath includes an additional strain on those already grappling with drug addiction and mental illness, further depleting their emotional resources.

Pan said that CHCS worked diligently to address the needs of people who were in treatment for substance addiction and found themselves in San Antonio after evacuating.

“We tried to coordinate people who had substance use [issues or were] on opioid treatment, identify them, get them in our methadone clinic to get them that or Suboxone,” Pan said. “It was mostly crisis intervention.”

Opioid withdrawal symptoms include muscle aches and pains, agitation, insomnia, abdominal cramping, and diarrhea, and may last for more than a month. Often the debilitating symptoms of withdrawal lead people back to using. Pan told the Rivard Report that getting these people the treatment they need is a form of crisis intervention because they might relapse if they run out of their medication.

Of the evacuees who came to San Antonio, Pan said, only three or four people over the span of the last few weeks were in need of acute care services. “We had several instances where people did need crisis

stabilization,” Pan said. “We brought them to our extended observation unit,” where they remained for 48 hours until their symptoms stabilized.

“People were already overwhelmed,” Pan said. “Maybe they had a diagnosed mental health concern [such as] schizophrenia, bipolar [disorder], or depression, who were not safe in the shelter, or maybe they were feeling suicidal.”

These individuals are treated by CHCS, which contracts with the Department of Health and Human Services, to provide services to “whoever comes needing services.”

Pan said that the Red Cross, FEMA, the Salvation Army, and the Bexar County Department of Behavioral and Mental Health are some of the organization that shared the brunt of providing services to those displaced by Harvey; CHCS was the sounding board as members of the various agencies worked to meet evacuees’ needs.

“Most of them just needed someone to talk to,” Pan said.

CHCS employees provided the majority of mental health services to evacuees in San Antonio; they also put out a call for volunteers licensed to provide mental health services to assist with around-the-clock coverage of local shelters. Those volunteers provided brief crisis intervention counseling, helping people to digest, accept, and heal from a traumatic experience, Pan said.

“Generally, people need to process what went on, relieve some emotion, and relieve some worry,” Pan said. “The capacity to deal with what was happening kind of overwhelmed their internal resources and they just needed someone to process things with.”

What helped mental health efforts across the state was the fact that “no one community got the brunt of everyone coming to their city,” Pan said. He recalled that Houston was a primary evacuation location when Hurricane Katrina hit, receiving around 75,000 people from New Orleans.

As people leave Bexar County and begin to return home, CHCS works to connect them to resources in their communities for a continuation of services. For many, processing immediate feelings of fear and despair during the time they were displaced may be the extent of their needs. Related: \$5 Million Gift from Charles Butt Leads San Antonio Giving to Harvey Victims

Pan said that some people’s traumatic experiences may begin when they return home. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) may set in as people return to the their communities destroyed by Hurricane Harvey. Stress may increase as people are unable to return to their homes and jobs, with the potential for an onset of major depression.

The experience of New Orleans residents in the aftermath of Katrina provides insight into how a traumatic natural disaster can impact a city.

The New Orleans Health Department issued a 2012 report on the state of mental health in the city. Seven years after Katrina, it concluded that while stress and trauma related to Katrina increased the need for mental health services, the infrastructure needed to service traumatized individuals was also impacted by the storm.

New Orleans has mostly recovered from the physical and psychological devastation of Hurricane Katrina, but for years after the storm survivors struggled with mental health challenges. Depression, anxiety, addiction, and, for those who experienced life-and-death scenarios, PTSD were common. In fact, one study found that rates of mental illness in New Orleans doubled after the storm.

In an attempt to make mental health services more accessible, the State of Texas has made it easier for out-of-state mental health workers, psychologists, and medical professionals to assist disaster victims by issuing temporary licenses for people in good professional standing to practice in the state during the time Gov. Greg Abbott's disaster declaration is in place.

The Speros are returning to Houston prepared to brave the unknown; what they know for certain is that they will not be able to return to the apartment they once called home.

"Sometimes I feel like if I wake up, that this was just a bad dream and everything will be okay again," Alex Spero said. "But I know that it won't."

Road Construction To End Soon In Garland

Tremonton (UT) Leader

By Cari Doutre

September 13, 2017

Progress is continuing on Garland City's wastewater treatment project and city officials expect that road work pertaining to that project will be completed by this fall.

"I think our residents have been very, very patient with us. I've heard very little complaints," said Garland City Mayor Todd Miller.

Tyson Knudson with Cascade Earth Sciences is overseeing the project and gave the city council an update on the project. Knudson reported that the city is still working with Rupps Trucking to complete this phase of the project. Knudson expects that work to be completed in the next six weeks.

Road work to repair underground sewer lines and install storm drains has kept crews busy in Garland over the past several months. That work is also coming to a close this fall. The city also reports that they are currently \$160,000 under budget on this multi-million dollar project.

Garland City was approved for two different categories related to the winter flooding issues. Lynette Sorensen, the city's emergency preparedness director, reported that FEMA approved funds to cover the cost of a pump used to remove excess water from flooded areas. Sorensen will meet with FEMA officials in person on October 3 in Brigham City to discuss flooding issues and compensation to the city. The city also donated 20 cases of paper towels to help flood victims in Houston, Texas.

Garland City Fire Chief Rob Johnson reported to the council that they assisted Weber County on Sept. 5-6 on a wildfire that damaged several homes and burned hundreds of acres. Johnson added that the department has already responded to 22 wildfire and county calls so far this year, assisting other departments in the fight to keep flames from spreading.

"Right now it's not uncommon to get two or three calls a week," Johnson added.

The department is also in talks with Honeyville City to hold joint firefighter classes to help volunteer firefighters advance in training.

Chad Hunt, Media Specialist with Bear River Valley Hospital, presented the council with a proclamation to declare September as Opioid Awareness Month in conjunction with the Bear River Health Department and Bear River Valley Hospital's campaign to raise awareness for prescription opioid abuse in Utah.

"We want people to be more vigilant with talking to doctors about opioid abuse and if it's truly necessary and the risk of addiction and to look for alternatives," Hunt told the council.

Hunt added that from January 2015 to July 2017, Bear River Valley Clinic and Bear River Valley Hospital prescribed about 6,500 opioid prescriptions, calculating about 400,000 pills. He added that every day 7,000 opioid prescriptions are filled in Utah alone. In 2015 there were 12 opioid related deaths in Box Elder County, Hunt added. The council approved the motion.

Texas AG sues businesses for price gouging during Harvey

FOX7-TV, Austin, TX

By: Noelle Newton

September 12 2017

AUSTIN, Texas - Attorney General Ken Paxton has filed suit against three companies for price gouging during hurricane Harvey.

The office said expect to see more as investigators have received 3,320 complaints.

Photo evidence shows one station price-gouging at \$6.99 for a gallon of gas. This is an example flooded into the attorney general's office during Hurricane Harvey.

"So it's disappointing right? I think in Texas we take pride in the fact that we help each other out," said Consumer Protection Division Chief Paul Singer.

From gas to groceries Consumer Protection Division Chief Paul Singer said the office received more than 3,300 complaints.

"\$30, \$40, \$50 dollars for a case of water," said Singer. "We've seen complaints for where people were selling milk for \$10 dollars for a half-gallon."

On Tuesday the Attorney General's Office filed suit against three businesses. Robstown Enterprises, owner of the Best Western Plus Tropic Inn, is accused of charging three times the normal room rate.

Bains Brothers, owners of Texaco gas stations in the Dallas-area are accused of charging \$6.99 for gas while displaying signs with prices in the \$3-4 dollar range. Receipts for the Carrollton store show the price for unleaded plus was going for \$2.79 at 5 a.m. on August 31st. By 11:19 a.m. unleaded was \$4.99. At 11:36 a.m., unleaded was \$5.99.

Encinal Fuel Stop, a Chevron brand station outside Laredo is accused of charging \$8.99 and \$9.99 a gallon.

"That can't be explained away by a simple market fluctuation," said Singer.

Singer said the majority of the offenders are in the Dallas area--far from where Harvey made landfall.

Technology is making the cases pretty easy to prove.

"Normally you get a consumer complaint and we have to take the allegations as true and then go to the company to figure out what happened. Here we have photo proof. We have people out there taking pictures of gas signs, of their receipts of the fuel pumps. That's really helpful to us in our enforcement work," said Singer.

Singer says the three lawsuits are just the tip of the iceberg.

"There is a lot of information for us to go through and we're going to make sure that companies that engage in illegal price-gouging are going to be held accountable," said Singer.

To report price gouging call 1-800-621-0508 or email consumeremergency@oag.texas.gov or file a complaint online here: <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/cpd/file-a-consumer-complaint>.

'Disaster SNAP' open to people affected by Hurricane Harvey

KTRK-TV, Houston, TX

September 13, 2017

HOUSTON, Texas -- The state of Texas is offering short-term food assistance to families who were affected by Hurricane Harvey.

Under the Disaster SNAP program, people can receive benefits when they return to their homes and have access to power and grocery stores after a disaster. The amount of the food allowance depends on household size and is equal to two months of the maximum amount of SNAP benefits.

The amount will be loaded onto a Lone Star Card.

There are certain requirements to be eligible for the help. You must have experienced a loss of income, destruction of your home or a disaster-related expense, such as temporary shelter or home repairs.

You must not have been getting regular SNAP food benefits. You must meet certain income limits, which you can find at the Texas Health and Human Services website.

And you must be from a county that was declared a federal disaster area.

The program requires you to apply in person only at a designated D-SNAP location within your county, and you must bring government issued identification.

For now, counties with smaller populations have designated locations open. Bigger population counties, like Harris County, will have locations open in the coming days, according to Health and Human Services.

You can get information on applying at the Texas HHS website.

After The Hurricanes, Watch Out For The Flood Of Damaged Cars

Washington Post

By Courtland Milloy

September 12, 2017

First there were reports of price gouging during hurricanes Harvey and Irma — store owners charging up to \$99 for a \$10 case of water, for instance. Then the FBI began warning about fake charities soliciting money for hurricane victims and absconding with the funds.

Now, get ready for what could be the most consequential scam of all: an unprecedented flood of water-damaged vehicles coming soon to a car lot near you.

A warning issued last week by AAA Mid-Atlantic and the National Insurance Crime Bureau noted as many as a million vehicles may have been damaged by the hurricanes that hit Texas and Florida, and that “many of those vehicles . . . may soon end up for sale in other parts of the country, all the way up to the Washington metro area.”

The Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association issued an alert, too, that “dealers should watch out for flood-damaged cars at auction.”

But it’s the buyers who really need to watch it. You don’t just lose money on purchasing a defective car. Driving a car that has corroding brakes, rusty steering and blow-dried electronic systems can cost you a life.

The region already has some of the most dangerous driving conditions in the country. A survey by WalletHub in July ranked us 97th out of 100 when it came to traffic safety, access to vehicle maintenance and the cost of repair. The last thing we need is an influx of defective cars.

Moreover, the demand for used cars continues to increase as the region’s population grows. College students, immigrants and entry-level employees are among the used car seller’s best customers. They also tend to be the least experienced when it comes to buying and driving a car.

The damaged vehicles are expected to start hitting the Washington market within two months, if not sooner, according to AAA. These are the cars that you saw in television reports, the ones in parking and car dealership lots, beneath highway overpasses, overturned in canals. The ones in high water can be infested with insects, reptiles and rats and contaminated with toxic chemicals and even raw sewage.

“Once the deluged autos are meticulously dried out, scoured and scrubbed, and the title is ‘washed,’ they are sold in other states by unscrupulous sellers and fly-by-night operators,” said John B. Townsend II, AAA Mid-Atlantic’s manager of public and government affairs.

A title is supposed to indicate whether the vehicle has been flood damaged — meaning it had been submerged in water deep enough to cover the engine. When a title is “washed,” that critical information gets deleted.

Insurance companies generally declare such vehicles a total loss and give their customers a modest payout. But in the Houston area, where an estimated 1 out of 7 vehicles was damaged by Hurricane Harvey, at least 25 percent of the owners did not have comprehensive insurance that covered such damage.

Any compensation they receive will most likely come from selling the car to a salvage company, which may clean it up just enough to put up for auction.

“The cars will turn up at auctions, where all you have to do is raise your hand to place a bid,” Townsend said. “It’s like getting married without knowing anything about your fiancée.”

AAA recommends prospective buyers obtain a CARFAX Vehicle History Report. “This can reveal if a vehicle has been involved in a flood, major crash, fire or uncover odometer fraud,” Townsend said. “Be sure to check for anything coming out of Florida or Texas.”

The Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association suggests checking the car for telltale signs of flooding, such as “water stains under the carpet,” “rusted components, water residue or suspicious corrosion in electrical wiring” and “a musty odor in the interior sometimes covered with a strong air freshener.”

As we have seen time and again, disasters can bring out the best in us. Yet, for every act of heroism and generosity there seems to be a corresponding display of greed and deceit.

When it comes to the flood damaged car scam, Townsend said, “Let the buyer beware.”

Fla. Gov. Rick Scott: ‘Work To Do’ For State To Recover After Irma **Associated Press**

By Jason Dearen And Martha Mendoza
September 13, 2017

LOWER MATECUMBE KEY, Fla. (AP) — Parts of Florida inched back toward normal with workers restoring power, clearing roads and replenishing gas supplies, even as teams scoured the state’s southernmost islands and authorities warned of mass devastation.

Residents drifted back from shelters and far-away havens Tuesday to see Hurricane Irma’s scattershot destruction. Flooded streets remained, and the count of damaged and totaled homes ticked upward even as some curfews were lifted, flights resumed and amusement park rides again twirled.

“Everything’s gone,” said Jen Gilreath, a 33-year-old bartender whose Jacksonville home filled with knee-high floodwaters.

As crews labored to repair the lone highway connecting the Keys, residents of some of the islands closest to Florida’s mainland were allowed to return and get their first look at the devastation two days after Irma roared in with 130 mph (209 kph) winds.

Federal Emergency Management Agency administrator Brock Long said preliminary estimates suggested that 25 percent of the homes in the Keys were destroyed and 65 percent sustained major damage.

“Basically, every house in the Keys was impacted,” he said.

The number of deaths blamed on Irma in Florida climbed to 12, in addition to four in South Carolina and two in Georgia. At least 37 people were killed in the Caribbean. The Florida deaths include four people who died of carbon monoxide poisoning from electric generators in two separate incidents.

“We’ve got a lot of work to do, but everybody’s going to come together,” Florida Gov. Rick Scott said. “We’re going to get this state rebuilt.”

Glimpses of Irma’s economic toll were emerging, with Florida saying 31 state agencies had already amassed nearly \$250 million in preparation and recovery expenses. In the meantime, officials warily eyed storm

damage to its citrus crops, an issue Sens. Bill Nelson and Marco Rubio planned to address at a joint news conference Wednesday morning with growers.

The number of people without electricity in the steamy late-summer heat dropped to 9.5 million — just under half of Florida’s population. Utility officials warned it could take 10 days or more for power to be fully restored. About 110,000 people remained in shelters across the state.

In hard-hit Naples, on Florida’s southwest coast, more than 300 people stood outside a Publix grocery store in the morning, waiting for it to open.

One man complained loudly that the line had too many gaps. Others shook their heads in frustration at word of another delay.

At the front of the line after a more than two-hour wait, Phill Chirchirillo, 57, said days without electricity and other basics were beginning to wear on people.

“At first it’s like, ‘We’re safe, thank God.’ Now they’re testy,” he said. “The order of the day is to keep people calm.”

While nearly all of Florida was engulfed by the 400-mile-wide (645-kilometer) storm, the Keys — home to about 70,000 people — appeared to be the hardest hit. Drinking water and power were cut off, all three of the islands’ hospitals were closed, and the supply of gasoline was extremely limited.

Search-and-rescue teams made their way into the more distant reaches of the Keys, and an aircraft carrier was positioned off Key West to help. Officials said it was not known how many people ignored evacuation orders and stayed behind in the Keys.

Crews also worked to repair two washed-out, 300-foot (90-meter) sections of U.S. 1, the highway that runs through the Keys, and check the safety of the 42 bridges linking the islands.

In Islamorada, a trailer park was devastated, the homes ripped apart as if by a giant claw. A sewage-like stench hung over the place.

Debris was scattered everywhere, including refrigerators, washers and dryers, a 25-foot (8-meter) fishing boat and a Jacuzzi. Homes were torn open to give a glimpse of their contents, including a bedroom with a small Christmas tree decorated with starfish.

One man and his family came to check on a weekend home and found it destroyed. The sight was too much to bear. The man told his family to get back in the car, and they drove off toward Miami.

The Lower Keys — including the chain’s most distant and most populous island, Key West, with 27,000 people — were still off-limits, with a roadblock in place where the highway was washed out.

Although the Keys are studded with mansions and beachfront resorts, about 13 percent of the people live in poverty and could face big obstacles as the cleanup begins.

“People who bag your groceries when you’re on vacation — the bus drivers, hotel cleaners, cooks and dishwashers — they’re already living beyond paycheck to paycheck,” said Stephanie Kaple, who runs an organization that helps the homeless in the Keys.

Corey Smith, a UPS driver who rode out the hurricane in Key Largo, said it was a relief that many buildings on the island escaped major damage. But he said conditions were still not good, with branches blocking roads and supermarkets closed.

“They’re shoving people back to a place with no resources,” he said by telephone. “It’s just going to get crazy pretty quick.

Mendoza reported from Atlanta. Associated Press writers Terry Spencer in Palm Beach County; Gary Fineout and Joe Reedy in Tallahassee; Jay Reeves in Immokalee; Terrance Harris in Orlando; Claire Galofaro in Jacksonville; and Freida Frisaro, Jennifer Kay, Curt Anderson and David Fischer in Miami contributed to this report.

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Florida Governor Vows To Rebuild Sunshine State

[Boston Herald](#)

September 13, 2017

LOWER MATECUMBE KEY, Fla. — With 25 percent of the homes in the Florida Keys feared destroyed, emergency workers yesterday rushed to find Hurricane Irma’s victims — dead or alive — and deliver food and water to the stricken island chain.

As crews labored to repair the lone highway connecting the Keys, residents of some of the islands closest to Florida’s mainland were allowed to return and get their first look at the devastation.

“It’s going to be pretty hard for those coming home,” said Petrona Hernandez, whose concrete home on Plantation Key with 35-foot walls was unscathed, unlike others a few blocks away. “It’s going to be devastating to them.”

But because of disrupted phone service and other damage, the full extent of the destruction was still a question mark, more than two days after Irma roared into the Keys with 130 mph winds.

Elsewhere in Florida, life inched closer to normal, with some flights again taking off, many curfews lifted and major theme parks reopening. Cruise ships that extended their voyages and rode out the storm at sea began returning to port with thousands of passengers.

The number of people without electricity in the steamy late-summer heat dropped to 9.5 million — just under half of Florida’s population. Utility officials warned it could take 10 days or more for power to be fully restored. About 110,000 people remained in shelters across Florida.

The number of deaths blamed on Irma in Florida climbed to 13, in addition to four in South Carolina and two in Georgia. At least 37 people were killed in the Caribbean.

“We’ve got a lot of work to do, but everybody’s going to come together,” Florida Gov. Rick Scott said. “We’re going to get this state rebuilt.”

Irma's rainy remnants, meanwhile, pushed through Alabama and Mississippi after drenching Georgia. Flash-flood watches and warnings were issued around the Southeast.

While nearly all of Florida was engulfed by the 400-mile-wide storm, the Keys — home to about 70,000 people — appeared to be the hardest hit. Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator Brock Long said that preliminary estimates suggested that 25 percent of the homes in the Keys were destroyed and 65 percent sustained major damage.

Hurricane Irma And Harvey \$15B Disaster Fund Won't Last 30 Days, Says Ex-FEMA Chief

[Newsweek](#)

By Graham Lanktree

September 13, 2017

Hurricanes Irma and Harvey survivors will be lucky if billions of dollars in disaster relief agreed by Congress last week last more than a month, according to the former head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA.)

“It’s not enough,” James Lee Witt, FEMA chief for eight years under President Bill Clinton, tells Newsweek of the funds earmarked last week for the recovery effort after the two storms left a trail of destruction across Texas, Florida, Georgia and South Carolina. “It would be lucky if it lasts 30 days with both of these events going on at the same time.”

A family arrives at their house, which was flooded after the passing of Hurricane Irma in Immokalee, Florida, U.S. September 12, 2017 Stephen Yang/Reuters

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In a rare bipartisan move the House and Senate passed a combined \$15.2 billion in hurricane relief mainly targeted at helping victims of Harvey in Texas and Louisiana last week. Congress may agree on Hurricane Irma recovery money for Florida soon.

In Texas, the long-term recovery from Hurricane Harvey “will be \$100 billion at least,” Witt said. Governor Greg Abbott has put the number at \$150 to \$180 billion.

Read more: With Hurricane Irma and Harvey Relief Underway, One-Third of FEMA Leadership Positions Unfilled

“I haven’t seen early estimates on Florida,” Witt added of recovery costs there. Irma was “the first time we’ve seen a hurricane cover the entire state it was so wide,” he said, estimating the cost of recovery will cost much more than the \$26.5 billion in damage Hurricane Andrew did to Florida in 1992.

The total costs of damage the government might end up footing the bill for in Texas and Florida “could top \$175 billion,” Witt said, adding “then you’ve got the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.”

Florida Congress members agree with Witt’s assessment. “Fifteen billion dollars is only going to last us a few weeks,” said Democratic Florida Senator Bill Nelson after touring the damage with Republican Senator

Marco Rubio on Monday. “By the middle of October, we’ll have to do another emergency supplemental appropriation,” Nelson told reporters.

As flood water recedes in Texas after Hurricane Harvey and storm surge and flooding in Florida dies down “now the most important thing is getting people signed up for assistance,” Witt said.

“They have an opportunity here to build back better and safer and use individual assistance program,” he insisted. The government is offering a 90 percent federal cost-share for debris removal, 100 percent reimbursement for hurricane preparations, and direct financial assistance for those in the hardest hit areas in Texas and Florida. Witt urges everyone who could qualify to apply online as soon as they can.

Brock Long, the current head of FEMA, said Monday that there are still 200,000 people in shelters from the storm in Florida and that “it’s going to be a long frustrating event for Floridians.” On Tuesday FEMA said 25 percent of homes in the Florida Keys were destroyed by Hurricane Irma and 65 percent have major damage.

Long’s response to these historic natural disasters “has been right on,” said Witt, adding that Long’s leadership is a “big plus” for FEMA. Communication is key, he added, and right now people need good public information about what’s going on to keep “that frustration level down” as people pass through the shock, frustration, and anger they often feel after a disaster.

A key thing survivors need to know, Witt said, is to be careful when returning to their homes with their families.

“A flood is worse than anything. Because you get all that mud and mulk in your homes and business. It would be better if the parents went first,” he said, but “sometimes it just doesn’t work that way.” Children are some of the most vulnerable in disaster situations, he said.

In Houston The New York Times carried out a series of tests of flood waters and published their findings Monday of high levels of E. coli, a bacteria commonly found in sewage, in water inside flooded homes.

“There’s pretty clearly sewage contamination, and it’s more concentrated inside the home than outside the home,” said Lauren Stadler, an assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering at Rice University, who tested water for the paper.

“I know some kids were playing in the floodwater outside those places. That’s concerning to me,” she said. The Environmental Protection Agency, Associated Press, CNN, and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality have all tested water and expressed concern about contamination.

People thinking of returning home with their children or elderly family members before their house can be cleaned should think twice, Dr. David Persse, the chief medical officer of Houston, told The Times .

“It’s very dangerous,” Witt said of the possibility for contamination. He urged people to take precautions. “They need to remember to wear masks and gloves and rubber boots,” he said. “Particular when they start ripping down walls and insulation out. If they haven’t had a tetanus shot in a while, they need to get a tetanus shot just in case they get cut or step on a nail or something sharp” as bacteria looms throughout the disaster zone.

Children may need even greater amounts of care and attention to understand what’s happened, said Witt, who works with the children’s nonprofit The Hero in You Foundation. He urged storm victims to create a

family plan and give their children a number—preferably out of state—to family friends they can reach in case they get separated from each other during the recovery.

“It’s important that young kids know what to do,” Witt said, urging FEMA’s chief Long to “explain that to children.”

“Many of the floods that I saw are pretty traumatic on kids,” he said, noting that “a lot of times in disasters, the parents get so involved in trying to recover and trying to get assistance they forget about the kids in extent of explaining to the kids what happened.”

Children need an outlet to vent their frustration too. During North Dakota’s Red River flood in 1997, Witt said he saw teachers from an evacuated school getting their kids to write poems and draw pictures about how the flood impacted their lives.

Just like their parents, Witt said, kids “need to explain how they feel and how it affected them, and it helps them to get through that.”

Recovery

Nueces County recovery includes mosquito spraying, debris pickup and FEMA assistance

[The Caller-Times, Corpus Christi, TX](#)

By Julie Garcia

September 13, 2017

Nueces County did not go unscathed when Hurricane Harvey made landfall last month even though Corpus Christi and the western areas did not bear the brunt.

Port Aransas experienced 132 mph winds and a storm surge of about eight feet, which has crippled many of the businesses for at least three months.

The Nueces County Emergency Management Office delivered an update on the county's recovery plans, including aerial mosquito spraying schedules, debris pickup and federal resources such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency, at Wednesday's commissioners court meeting.

"Our office is responsible for unincorporated areas of Nueces County," said Christopher Boyce, emergency management coordinator. "We support every city in this area, especially the western cities, but any city that asks for assistance. Every disaster begins and ends locally."

Dan McElhinney, a FEMA division supervisor, advises people to apply for FEMA regardless of how small the damage to their property might be. You can apply for FEMA at www.disasterassistance.gov or by calling 1-800-621-3362.

After the storm hit, the Texas Department of State Health Services stepped in to assist with aerial mosquito spraying in Coastal Bend counties.

Nueces County was sprayed for mosquitoes on Sept 9, and there will be a second spraying before the end of the month, said Isidoro Prado, public health administrator for the Corpus Christi-Nueces County Public Health District.

"Ninety-five percent are floodwater mosquitoes," Prado said.

Mosquitoes have been trapped across the county, but only a few of those caught have been *Aedes aegypti*, which is the kind that harbors viruses like Zika and West Nile.

Debris removal in the western part of the county is being handled by two hired contractors, as well as Absolute Waste, the contractor that picks up garbage regularly, said Glen Sullivan, public works director.

There is a limit of about 35 pounds of debris and waste that will be picked up by Absolute Waste, Sullivan said.

All waste needs to be separated by tree debris and house debris.

John Metz, warning coordination meteorologist with National weather Service-Corpus Christi, gave a post-hurricane presentation that detailed the service's process from mid-August to now.

Harvey has been ranked the 16th strongest land-falling storm to hit the United States. It's the first major hurricane to the country since Hurricane Wilma in 2005 and the first Category 4 hurricane to hit Texas since Hurricane Carla in 1961, according to the presentation.

Preliminary impacts in Nueces County find that 4,170 homes had major damage and more than 1,000 homes were destroyed. Nearly 500 businesses have major damage.

So far, \$200 million has been spent on Harvey recovery costs in Texas, Metz said.

NFIP and Flood Mapping

Why The Government Sells Flood Insurance Despite Losing Money : NPR

September 13, 2017

Why The Government Sells Flood Insurance Despite Losing Money : NPR

Why The Government Sells Flood Insurance Despite Losing Money

Author Interviews

9/13/2017

Why The Government Sells Flood Insurance Despite Losing Money The National Flood Insurance Program was operates like an insurance company in many ways except one: it just about always loses money. This piece originally aired on Morning Edition in January 2013.

Lloyd's Demands US Reforms After Devastating Hurricanes

[Law360](#)

By William Shaw

September 13, 2017

U.S. Congress must urgently deliver a greater role to private flood insurers following the devastation wrought by hurricanes Harvey and Irma, according to Lloyd's of London.

Amid changing climates and weather patterns, lawmakers must swiftly unburden the federal National Flood Insurance Program, which is tasked with offering affordable flood cover but suffers a funding shortfall of more than \$24 billion, the world's biggest speciality insurer said in a statement released Tuesday.

"We urgently need reform to the flood insurance market in the U.S. to make these...

Will Rebuilding After Hurricanes Harvey And Irma Make More Flooding Inevitable?

[The New Yorker](#)

By Elizabeth Kolbert

September 13, 2017

The aim of the National Flood Insurance Program, which was created by Congress, in 1968, in the aftermath of Hurricane Betsy, is to provide "affordable insurance to property owners." The program offers what amounts to subsidized coverage, and according to its critics, and also to some of its supporters, the N.F.I.P. has had the perverse effect of encouraging rebuilding in areas where homes and businesses probably shouldn't have been built in the first place.

Many homes enrolled in the program have been flooded and repaired more than once. These are known as "repetitive-loss properties." Then there are homes that have been flooded and repaired at least four times. These are known as "severe repetitive-loss properties." Into this latter category falls a Mississippi house valued at sixty-nine thousand dollars. The house has flooded thirty-four times, resulting in a total of six hundred and sixty-three thousand dollars in claims.

"It's basically lather, rinse, repeat," Steve Ellis, the vice-president of the non-partisan group Taxpayers for Common Sense, recently told Politico.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the National Flood Insurance Program, which was supposed to pay for itself, is deeply in debt; it owes nearly twenty-five billion dollars to the federal government. Authorization for the program was set to expire on September 30th, but then, last Friday, with Houston still flooded from Hurricane Harvey and Florida bracing for Irma, President Trump signed a bill extending the authorization for three months.

Figuring out how to fix the N.F.I.P. is a real and urgent task. (In 2012, Congress approved a measure that was supposed to raise N.F.I.P. premiums, to better reflect the actuarial risk of the policies; then, in 2014, lawmakers reversed themselves, approving a second measure that effectively countermanded the first.) It might also be seen as a metaphor. The response to a disaster can reduce the damage from future calamities, or it can exacerbate it. As Houston and the battered cities of Florida start to look toward rebuilding,

obviously decisions ought to be made with an eye toward reducing future risks. But, given who's running the country and the states most affected, it's hard to imagine they will be.

Consider the situation in Florida. In many parts of the state, owing to climate change and the accompanying sea-level rise, rain is no longer a prerequisite for flooding. All that's needed is an unusually high tide. Floridians call this "sunny-day flooding." A study published in 2016 in the journal *Ocean & Coastal Management* found that in Miami Beach the frequency of such flooding had increased by a remarkable four hundred per cent over the previous ten years.

Scientists studying this phenomenon have exhorted Florida's Republican governor, Rick Scott, to acknowledge the problem and try to figure out how to deal with it. Instead, Scott has prohibited state officials from even talking about climate change.

"It's more than an absence of leadership," Eric Buermann, the former board chairman for the Southwest Florida Water Management District, who is also the former general counsel to the state's Republican Party, told the *Washington Post* last week. "There's harm being done by denying the problem."

(As it happens, much of Irma's destruction was caused by wind, rather than by flooding, but here again government policy may have put more people at risk. In Florida, after Hurricane Andrew, which struck in 1992, it became so difficult to get insurance against wind damage that the state formed its own insurance company and offered incentives to induce private companies to enter the market. Now no one is sure whether those private companies will be able to pay out.)

America is, of course, currently a nation run by deniers. Trump is the denier-in-chief, and he has appointed deniers of various stripes to virtually all key positions. These include Ryan Zinke as Secretary of the Interior, Rick Perry as Secretary of Energy, and Scott Pruitt as the head of the Environmental Protection Agency. Just last week, the President nominated another climate denier, Representative Jim Bridenstine, a Republican of Oklahoma, to run NASA.

Climate change clearly exacerbated the damage of both Harvey and Irma, if for no other reason than the fact that higher sea levels produce higher storm surges. (In addition, hurricanes draw their energy from the warm surface waters of the oceans; as sea surface temperatures rise, storms are expected to become more ferocious, and, since higher temperatures also produce evaporation, storms will drop more rain.) But last week, as Irma bore down on Florida, Pruitt told CNN, "To have any kind of focus on the cause and effect of the storm versus helping people, or actually facing the effect of the storm, is misplaced." This prompted the Republican mayor of Miami, Tomás Regalado, to respond that this was, in fact, exactly "the time that the president and the E.P.A. and whoever makes decisions needs to talk about climate change."

"If this isn't climate change, I don't know what is," Regalado told the *Miami Herald*. "This is a truly, truly poster child for what is to come."

Which brings us back to the National Flood Insurance Program. Even before Harvey and Irma, Texas and Florida were among the states with the most frequently flooded properties. (The others are Louisiana and New York.) One of the reasons that the N.F.I.P. is in so much trouble is that most of its flood maps don't account for climate change and hence are out of date.

Writing about the program on Monday in the *Washington Post*, Logan Strother, a visiting scholar at Princeton, noted that the N.F.I.P. could be redesigned "to discourage people and businesses from living and building in flood areas—and to help with the costs for those who are flooded nevertheless." But he doubted whether this would actually happen. Congress isn't keen on making the needed changes, and state and local

officials, and also homeowners and developers, are usually more interested in trying to preserve the status quo—even as it disappears under the waves.

After disasters, Strother lamented, “people rebuild right back in these areas, making the next major loss inevitable.”

Schools

HURRICANE HARVEY: Some damaged Texas schools still closed

Texas Statesman

By Julie Chang

September 13, 2017

Most Texas school districts in counties hit by Harvey have opened or will soon reopen, but officials at eight school districts in the Beaumont area as well as some in the Corpus Christi area still aren’t sure when they’ll start classes.

State Education Commissioner Mike Morath told the State Board of Education Wednesday morning that more than 1.4 million public school students are in counties affected by the storm. The timing of the storm thrust into uncertainty the start date for many districts as well how school boards would approve their budgets which must be done by Aug. 31 of each year.

The Houston school district has implemented a rolling start date for classes. The Woodsboro school district has reopened, but the Sheldon school district near Houston won’t reopen until Sept. 18. Eight school districts in the Beaumont area are still determining potential start dates as well as some in the Corpus Christi area.

Morath said Aransas Pass school board members, some of them in shelters, had to adopt the district’s budget over the phone.

“The hurricane was pretty massive,” Morath said. “We have been feverishly busy trying to support the affected school districts and charters all over the state of Texas.”

Morath added that school districts in affected areas opened up their campuses for evacuees and fired up cafeterias to feed families. Although the Pasadena superintendent couldn’t get to the school, she was able to remotely unlock it to house about 1,000 people. The Houston school district opened some 40 schools to house evacuees, too.

Texas Education Agency staff members and teachers also stepped up to conduct rescues and send donations to devastated areas, Morath said.

“The stories of heartbreak and of heroism that we’ve heard are nothing short of unbelievable,” Morath said. Morath said Gov. Greg Abbott has worked with FEMA officials to bring down recovery costs for school districts. In most cases, school districts will only have to pay 10 percent, instead of 25 percent, of recovery costs for, among other things, repairing buildings, replacing textbooks, and buying computers and food. He said the Texas Education Agency can tap its 2019 budget to help pay for any costs incurred by Harvey. Any hole left in the 2019 budget will have to be addressed in the next regular legislative session which starts January 2019.

Morath also said the agency hasn't made any decisions whether students will have to take state standardized tests this year or if the scores will count against students and schools in the accountability system. As of Wednesday, 233,500 people have signed an online petition to cancel the STAAR test and use that money for Harvey recovery.

The education agency has created a hotline for parents to ask about information related to Harvey — (512) 463-9603. The agency will also launch sometime next week a website for school districts affected by Harvey to solicit donations.

How to donate food, supplies to Hurricane Harvey victims in Central Texas **KVUE-TV, Austin, TX**

By Drew Knight

September 6, 2017

CENTRAL TEXAS - Looking for ways to help the victims displaced by Hurricane Harvey?

In addition to donating to the American Red Cross, there are a few ways you can help locally in Central Texas. Here's a list of how you can give food, supplies and monetary donations in the area:

Donate to American Red Cross

TEGNA stations across the state are raising money for the American Red Cross relief efforts. Donations made will go toward providing food, shelter, relief supplies, emotional support and recovery planning for the victims of Harvey.

An average of 91 cents for every dollar given is used for humanitarian services and programs. A small amount is used by the American Red Cross for fundraising and management. These donations are tax deductible.

TEGNA said the campaign, which was launched Monday, has already raised more than \$1.15 million in its first 24 hours. Donations can be made here.

Austin Disaster Relief Network

The Austin Disaster Relief Network (ADRN) is asking for financial contributions and survivor donations to benefit the evacuees expected in the Austin area in the coming days.

The ADRN said monetary donations are needed to provide support to survivors and will be distributed in the form of gift cards, emergency housing, emergency transportation and/or building materials. Donations can be made here.

ADRN is accepting donations at the following four locations:

1) ADRN Headquarters 1122 East 51st street;

Monday-Saturday 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

2) The Connection Church 1235 South Loop 4, Buda, Texas 78610;

Sunday-Thursday 10 a.m.- 4 p.m, Sunday 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

3) Celebration Distribution Center 601 Westinghouse Rd. Georgetown, Texas 78626

Monday-Saturday 9 a.m.-8 p.m.

4) 360 Warehouse 1905 South Capitol of TX Highway, Austin TX 78746

Monday-Saturday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Though it said clothing is not needed at this time, the following items are: toiletries, new pillows and blankets, cleaning supplies, utility knives, leather work gloves, inflatable mattresses, hand sanitizer and box fans.

In addition, the ADRN is calling for volunteers. Sign-up information can be found [here](#). The ADRN call center can be reached at 512-806-0800.

Bastrop Food Pantry

The Bastrop Food Pantry at 806 Fayette Street is accepting food donations from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. Here's a list of the items it is asking for:

- Canned meats, vegetables and fruits
- Corn bread mix
- Juices
- Hamburger, Chicken and Tuna Helper
- Assorted crackers
- Rice
- Peanut butter and jelly
- Dry beans
- Sugar
- Cereal (hot or cold)
- Instant potatoes
- Flour
- Pasta and tomato sauces
- Canned Beans
- Soups
- Toiletries
- Cooking oil
- Shelf stable milk

The food pantry asks that requests to arrange special pickups for bulky or large quantities of items be made by calling 512-303-0033.

Central Texas Food Bank

The Central Texas Food Bank said it is coordinating with state and other disaster relief providers, partner agencies, and Texas food banks and soup kitchens in areas hardest hit by Hurricane Harvey.

In the coming days, it will be preparing shipments of emergency food boxes consisting of ready-to-eat-items that will go to the areas where the need is most acute. The food bank said the best way for people to help is to donate funds so that it can provide these kinds of items. This helps the bank avoid the complications of sorting and distributing varied food items.

If you do wish to give food, the food bank said it will accept items like pop-top meat and fish, powdered milk, cereal, canned fruit, fruit cups, peanut butter and jelly and cleaning supplies.

Monetary donations can be made here.
The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army volunteer team from Austin has already deployed this week with a mobile kitchen capable of preparing and serving 900 meals a day and a mobile catering truck capable of delivering 1,900 meals a day. It has been serving people at shelters in Victoria, Cuero and Seadrift.

In response to increased need and provide victims with shelter, The Salvation Army is activating emergency response teams across the country and asking for public contributions.

In addition to donating online, you can also text STORM to 51555 or call 1-800-SAL-ARMY to make a contribution. Donations by mail can be delivered to P.O. Box 1959, Atlanta, Georgia, 30301.
La Grange Church of Christ

The La Grange Church of Christ has announced it will be accepting donations of supplies to be distributed across Fayette County or taken to Houston once roads are safe for travel. The church is located at 646 E. State Highway 71 in La Grange, Texas.

Here is a list of items it is accepting:

- Cleaning supplies
- De-humidifiers
- Air circulators
- Extension cords
- Ground fault protectors
- Pop-up canopies
- Shovels
- Wheelbarrows
- Crowbars
- Hammers
- Utility knives
- Work gloves
- Various tools
- Chainsaws
- Rope
- Safety glasses
- 5-gallon buckets
- Liquid laundry detergent
- Dish soap
- First-aid kits
- Bottled water

United Way of Williamson County

United Way of Williamson County is collecting items and monetary donations to help meet the immediate and long-term needs of those affected by the storms.

The organization said monetary donations can be made online, by texting "WilcoCares" to 91999, or by delivering a check made out to "United Way of Williamson County-Hurricane Relief Fund" to P.O. Box 708, Round Rock, Texas 78680. United Way said 100 percent of these tax-deductible donations will be directed to hurricane relief efforts.

Additionally, the organization is coordinating the collection of cleaning supplies and personal care items across the area. It will be accepting bottled water, cleaning supplies, contractor-grade trash bags, mops and buckets, heavy-duty work gloves, hand sanitizer and more. Clothing and bedding will not be accepted.

Collection locations can be found out:

United Way of Williamson County
11111 N. IH-35, Ste. 220, Round Rock, Texas 78664
Monday-Thursday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Toyota of Cedar Park
5600 183A, Cedar Park, Texas 78641
Monday-Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Mel's Lone Star Lanes
1010 N. Austin Ave., Georgetown, Texas 78626
Monday-Tuesday from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m.
Wednesday-Friday from 9 a.m. to midnight
Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 a.m.
Sunday from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Greater Taylor Chamber of Commerce
1519 N. Main St., Taylor, Texas 76574
Monday-Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Thursday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
We Are Blood

We Are Blood said it has an ongoing and growing need for blood donors, as many patients from coastal areas have been transported to hospitals in the region.

The organization said that on an average day, it needs to see at least 200 donors per day. That number magnifies during times of natural disaster and the need for donors will continue well into the next few weeks.

Those wishing to donate blood can visit the We Are Blood website or call 512-206-1266 to schedule an appointment. Walk-ins are also accepted but appointments are greatly appreciated. There are two donation locations in Austin, one in Round Rock, as well as several mobile drives taking place across the area.

We Are Blood said if a surplus of blood is donated, it will send more to our neighbors along the coast.
Keller Williams Realty - KW Cares

Keller Williams Realty is accepting donations through its relief group KW Cares, which it said has semi-trucks and warehouse space in place to respond to disasters around the country at a moment's notice.

In addition to a warehouse command center set up in Houston, Keller Williams Realty offices throughout Austin are mobilizing to help the victims of Harvey. From 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. this Monday through Thursday, the Keller Williams Southwest Market Center is collecting items at 1801 S. MoPac Expy.

Here's a list of items KW Cares is requesting:

- Wheelbarrows
- Large black trash bags
- Gloves
- Face masks
- Brooms, mops and cleaning supplies
- Paper towels, paper plates and toilet paper
- Plastic utensils
- Pet food
- Rubber boots
- First-aid kits
- Flashlights
- Batteries of all sizes
- Blankets
- Toiletries
- Bug spray
- New socks and underwear
- Bottled water
- Ice and Styrofoam coolers

Hurricane Harvey Benefit Fashion Show

The J.W. Marriott in Downtown Austin will be hosting at Hurricane Harvey Benefit Fashion Show at Friday, Sept. 8.

Event organizers said 100 percent of ticket sales will be donated to hurricane relief via J.J. Watt's hurricane relief fund. A minimum ticket purchase will cost \$50, but guests can donate as much as they like.

Participating runway designers include Daniel Esquivel, Ross Bennett, Samantha Plasencia, Gail Chovan, Masha Osoianu, Adrienne Yunger, the Austin School of Fashion Design and many more.

More info can be found on their website.
Austin Diaper Bank

RELATED:

How to help: Austin animal shelters expecting influx of animals after Hurricane Harvey

Note: This is an ongoing list. Check back for updates.

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[Volunteers needed for beach cleanups](#)

[FOX7, Austin, TX](#)

September 12 2017

AUSTIN, Texas - Cleanup efforts continue in parts of Texas that were ravaged by Hurricane Harvey.

The Texas coast was also hit hard and some parts were left destroyed.

Volunteers will hit the beaches for cleanup efforts starting Saturday Sept. 23. from 9 a.m to noon.

"Hurricane Harvey was a destructive force that ravaged communities along the coast, but on Sept. 23, Texans from far and wide are going to come together to help restore our Texas beaches," said Land Commissioner George P. Bush. "Many residents of the towns and communities along the Texas coast are dependent on tourism for their livelihood. Sign up now to join forces with thousands of other Texans who care about the coast and helping Texans rebuild."

If your interested in helping you can register online at www.TexasAdoptABeach.org. or register on-site at 8:30 a.m. Saturday for one of the 14 sites.

- o Houston/Galveston area: Galveston Island, Morgan's Point, Nature Conservancy's Texas City Prairie Preserve
- o Brazoria County: Quintana & Surfside Beach
- o Port O'Connor: Boggy Nature Park and King Fisher Beach
- o Corpus Christi: Baffin Bay, North Beach, North Padre Island/Padre Balli Park, and Padre Island National Seashore
- o Rio Grande Valley: South Padre Island/Andy Bowie Park, Town Beach Access #3 and Boca Chica

To learn more about the Adopt-A-Beach program, visit www.TexasAdoptABeach.org or contact the GLO at 1-877-TXCOAST.

Luke Bryan Invites Hurricane Harvey First Responders to Houston Show

Country FanCast

By Sarah Netemeyer

September 13, 2017

Country music hit-maker Luke Bryan has big plans for his upcoming Houston tour stop. Those plans include first responders and a generous donation!

Country music superstar Luke Bryan and his team are currently coordinating with Houston-area authorities to make tickets available to members of Hurricane Harvey's first responder teams to attend his Houston, Texas concert on Friday, September 22nd at Cynthia Woods Pavilion. Luke will also generously donate concert proceeds to benefit the Houston Community Fund.

On Tuesday night, Luke participated in the Hand in Hand: A Benefit for Hurricane Relief Telethon special live from Nashville as part of the celebrity phone bank answering donor calls. Check him out with actresses Reese Witherspoon and Nicole Kidman!

The show, which now benefits Hurricane Harvey and Irma victims, was broadcast across ABC, CBS, CMT, FOX and NBC from Los Angeles, New York, San Antonio, and Nashville at the Grand Ole Opry House. The show was also available internationally via live stream on Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter during the first broadcast and featured some of the nation's biggest stars including George Clooney, Jamie Foxx, Beyoncé, Rob Lowe, Matthew McConaughey, Dennis Quaid, Julia Roberts, Adam Sandler, Ryan Seacrest,

Blake Shelton, George Strait, Barbra Streisand, Cole Swindell, Oprah Winfrey, Reese Witherspoon, Nicole Kidman, and more.

The Hand In Hand telethon was a major hit! So far, the star-studded event has raised more than \$44 million for hurricane relief efforts in Texas and Florida.

Originally, the star-studded event was put together to benefit the victims of Hurricane Harvey in Texas. It was later expanded to include those affected by Irma, which hit the southeastern United States over weekend. According to new outlets, it has been estimated that both massive storms caused between \$150 billion and \$290 billion in damage to Texas and Florida.

At least 70 people died during Hurricane Harvey, and 22 deaths have been reported in the United States due to Hurricane Irma. We're thrilled to see Luke Bryan put in the time to really help out others and give the brave first responder teams the recognition they deserve.

Be sure to share this heartwarming update with other fans of the Georgia native!

Willie Nelson, Paul Simon join Texas Strong concert for Harvey relief

KVUE-TV, Austin, TX

September 13, 2017

AUSTIN, TEXAS - Willie Nelson, Paul Simon, James Taylor, Bonnie Raitt, Leon Bridges and others will come together on Friday, September 22 for the largest live benefit concert in Texas.

Harvey Can't Mess With Texas: A Benefit Concert for Hurricane Harvey Relief will take place at the Frank Erwin Center in Austin.

Performers include:

Willie Nelson
Paul Simon
James Taylor
Bonnie Raitt
Leon Bridges
Lyle Lovett
Nathaniel Rateliff & The Night Sweats
Eddie Brickell & New Bohemians
Ryan Bingham
Ha*Ash

The evening will include special appearances by Matthew McConaughey, Dan Rather, Renée Zellweger, Luke Wilson, Austin Mayor Steve Adler, Houston Chief of Police Art Acevedo and many more. Charlie Sexton will serve as Music Director, with Asleep at the Wheel sitting in as the house band.

Tickets go on sale today at 3:00 p.m. CT at www.rebuildtx.org, with prices ranging from \$30-\$199.

Eleven Texas stations will exclusively broadcast a one hour, commercial free special, "Texas Strong: Harvey Can't Mess With Texas," from 9:00 to 10:00 p.m. CT. The concert will also live stream internationally during the broadcast hour on [YouTube.com/TexasStrong](https://www.youtube.com/TexasStrong).

Google will match the first \$500,000 of donations through a pledge challenge. Volunteers from Google's Austin office and our station employees will staff the phone banks at select station locations across the state.

All viewers can support the relief efforts in post-Hurricane Harvey Texas by calling 1-833-2-HELPTX, or online at www.RebuildTX.org to make a donation.

Stations airing the broadcast concert include: WFAA, Dallas; KHOU, Houston; KVUE, Austin; KENS, San Antonio; KBMT, Beaumont; KCEN, Waco-Temple-Bryan; KAGS, College Station; KIII, Corpus Christi; KYTX, Tyler; KIDY, San Angelo; and KXVA, Abilene. These are all stations owned by our parent company, TEGNA.

"We got lucky when Hurricane Harvey avoided Austin, but though it missed us, it hit our neighbors hard. Every time I've asked you to help our neighbors you've risen to the challenge," said Austin Mayor Steve Adler. "Now we have an opportunity to do good by being our best, and that means putting on a show and having a good time. Let's show the world what it means to be the Live Music Capital of the World in the greatest state in the Union. I'll be there and hope to see you, too."

Proceeds will benefit Rebuild Texas Fund. Rebuild Texas Fund was created by the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation in collaboration with the OneStar Foundation. The four focus areas of the fund include: health and housing; schools and child care; workforce and transportation; and capital for small businesses. The Dells are working to raise a total of \$100 million for the long-term relief, recovery and rebuilding efforts for all affected communities in Texas. "For us, this is personal," said Susan Dell. Both Michael and Susan Dell are Texas natives and Michael Dell is from Houston. "This fund was created to help rebuild all of the communities – big and small – that have been devastated by Hurricane Harvey. We will be rebuilding for years to come," said Michael Dell.

Harvey Can't Mess With Texas: A Benefit Concert for Hurricane Harvey Relief is generously organized with donated efforts and services by Springboard Productions, Solomon Group, Big House Sounds, Soundcheck Austin, The Frank Erwin Center, Hotel Van Zandt, GSD&M, Andy Langer, Texas Music Office, and the City of Austin, as well as media partners KUTX, KGSR, Texas Monthly, Austin American Statesman, and Austin Chronicle. TEGNA is producing the broadcast in partnership with Debra Davis Productions. Austin-based C3 Presents will proudly produce the live event with all services donated.

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Social Media

Summary

On social media today, scams, neighborhood debris issues and flood insurance continues to be on the minds of Texans. While there are some positive supportive posts about FEMA in general, the posts discussing Harvey and Texas tend towards negative sentiment.

- People are sharing a diverse mix of personal opinions and news stories such as the one by DallasNews.com that states that on Wednesday, NFIP Director Roy Wright [pledged to quickly to get money](#) into affected policyholders hands, despite the program only having \$1.5 billion on hand.

- User discussions continually point to the fact that the NFIP is in debt and may run out of money, which is concerning to residents ([Example 1](#), [Example 2](#)).
- One person tweeted that [FEMA will only be able to help so much](#), due to only “20%” of Houston homeowners having NFIP coverage.

Security Concerns

- A militia group is [actively recruiting armed members](#) and non-members to come to Texas to assist with what they claim are security operations. Some have been here since early in the flood rescue efforts. One of the posts on this group’s Facebook page takes you to a [link to donate](#) to their group so that they can continue [keep disaster supplies safe](#) from “disaster pirates” ([Group website](#)).
- A citizen [posted on twitter](#) that they are concerned with the presence of militia members in Texas who claim to be helping on disaster relief but who have also been active in many recent rally events around the country. The citizen posted that this group [associates with violent individuals](#). One of the posts in this twitter thread also [tagged the @FEMAregion6 account](#).

FEMA

- There was low activity on the FEMA page discussing Hurricane Harvey; the comments that mentioned Texas were mostly negative.
- Many are [reacting to a post](#) from a local resident seeking help on how to go about removing mold from her apartment because the landlord and FEMA have not been much help. Commenters are advising her to call FEMA and keep calling until she gets hold of someone, but other commenters advise that she should seek assistance from nongovernmental groups.
- [An update post](#) about three Harvey-affected families living in Eagle Lake is gaining moderate attention.
 - The families were displaced due to the hurricane and has been staying in a hotel since.
 - A commenter suggest they file for FEMA or other relief agencies to help find better living arrangements until they can return to their homes.
 - Another commenter is stating all those agencies are backed up so the family is waiting to hear a response.
 - Most are expressing sympathy to the families.
- Texas citizen posts under a photo collection on the FEMA Facebook page that only Houston is being helped by FEMA (cannot link directly to the post because it’s a photo collection) <https://www.facebook.com/FEMA/posts/10155252571729965>

Recovery

- A KFDM article about Berthing barges [being used to house survivors](#) at Port Arthur linked to their [Facebook page](#) has been gaining traction at 240+ impressions, 173+ shares, and 56+ comments. Public response has been mixed, with some users [saying it is needed](#) and others [complaining](#) that FEMA should have [brought out trailers](#) instead or saying that FEMA would be bringing out trailers in [conjunction with the barges](#).

- Hardin County Emergency Management posted that they had [requested a FEMA DRC](#) for their county and promised to provide updates. [Modest but positive](#) response in the comment section.
- Jefferson County announced the opening of a [Disaster Recovery Center](#) on 09/13/17. 115+ shares were done on the post, and in the comments users expressed confusion about the [perceived lack of communication](#) for the Disaster Recovery Center in Port Arthur.
- There have been some traffic about “FEMA Trailers”, mainly questions from people wondering whether they will be made available ([Example](#)).

FEMA Denials

- Residents continue to share their frustrations over FEMA denials and inspection issues.
 - One person posted that they met with a second inspector who stated that for every one inspection, he comes behind them 3 times due to [incorrectly conducted inspections](#).
 - Multiple residents are expressing their frustration at being denied ([Example 1](#), [Example 2](#)).
 - Some users are replying to these posts and providing helpful tips and guidance ([Example 1](#), [Example 2](#)).
- There is [a moderate conversation](#) surrounding survivors getting approved or awaiting approval for disaster assistance through FEMA. Some commenters are saying it’s taking a long time for their assistance money to be added to their personal bank accounts. Others are just waiting to hear back on if they have been approved by FEMA or not. There also appears to be confusion being shared about [which funds need to be paid back](#)
- There are some [conversations occurring](#) surrounding what FEMA denies or approves for disaster impacted homes. Some residents are sharing what they know through their experiences with FEMA. Most are upset because they do not fully understand why some items or their homes are being denied compared to others.
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Vector Control

- Brazoria County put out an [active post](#) with 316+ shares on their official Facebook about vector control in their area. Comments are mixed between [overwhelmingly positive](#), asking for vector control in their [specific areas](#), and skeptics who think that the vector control will [harm humans](#).
- County Judge Trey Duhon [posted an update](#) on vector control in Waller County which has received moderate activity. Response was generally positive, but as we reported in yesterday’s listening report, residents are concerned about the effect the vector control will have over the [local bee population](#).

Survivor Health Concerns

- A news article posted on twitter stating that water testing shows that toxic water flooded Houston homes: <https://twitter.com/grist/status/908285973645099009>
- [Here is the article mentioned in the tweet](#)

- The article links to a [New York Times article from Sept 11](#) that first mentioned the Houston water testing.